

THE SONGS OF SPRING.

Season Not Complete Without Red-Winged Blackbird—Sings Only Three Notes.

The joyous symphony begins with the advent of spring, it swells to the proportions of a romping scherzo in May, reaches its climax in a grand chorus in June, and fades away in a diminuendo sustained by the red-eyed vireo and whip-poor-will in late July, says Frank Leslie's Monthly. We will imagine here on the left there is a hillside wood, on the right the meadow slopes gently to the river, bordered by maple and elm, and before us is the unfrequented grassy road margined by shrubbery, and with here and there a slim, graceful gray birch or red-stemmed bird-cherry. In such an environment we compass the common haunts of our familiar song birds, though I should have included a stretch of swamp beyond the meadow, to make the bird landscape complete, and bring within bounds the red-winged blackbird. Spring is not complete without him; his coat is jet black and on his shoulders are epaulets of scarlet bordered with buff; he is always in the shrubbery or among the cat-tails bordering the swamp, and the music coming from there is unmistakably his. There are never more than three notes to his song, the first one is always the lowest and softest, so that at a distance it is often lost, and the third is burred—strangely so. If you wish to imitate the notes, whistle F, and for the third long, burred note whistle G and hum G two octaves lower in the bass.

FARMERS ARE SWINDLED.

By Sharpers Who Can Make Agricultural Department Bulletins a Source of Profit.

"While agricultural departments of the national government and of the various states are doing good work and their investigations and experiments have been of great value to farmers, gardeners, and stock raisers," said a retired farmer the other day, "bands of sharpers take advantage of every official announcement made by the authorities. "For instance, a department announces the discovery of an insect that destroys the cabbage. Within 24 hours the sharpers are advertising a powder that will destroy these insects. A department announces the appearance of the elm pest. In every locality in the country appear smooth-talking gentlemen who claim to be able to prevent damage to the trees by this insect. People believe them and pay them money, only to have their trees killed by the very methods which the sharpers claim will save them from destruction by the pests. "The national agricultural department at Washington has announced recently that the 17-year locusts will appear this year, and following this there have suddenly sprung into existence several unique methods of destroying these insects or of preventing their ravages."

A Strong Light.

The newest lighthouse on the French coast shows a beam visible at a distance of 39 nautical miles in clear weather. It is situated on the Isle Vierge, off the French coast, to the northeast of Ushant, the lantern being 244 feet above sea level.

COLORED ENVELOPES ARE BAD

Cause Much Trouble to Post Office Clerks Who Work in Dimly-Lighted Apartments.

Colored envelopes used by some business houses in the dispatch of mail are causing the post offices and the railway mail clerks considerable annoyance and trouble. Addresses on them, unless written with a typewriter, are almost undecipherable. When the fact is considered that most of the work in handling letters is done under gaslight and on swaying mail cars, it will not seem

envelopes as a device designed for their particular discomfort.

Red is the worst color in the spectrum for envelope use. Blue is next. Unless the address is written in the blackest of ink it appears as nothing under the artificial light. Colors are more enduring as they approach white.

Many postmasters have had occasion to make special suggestions to firms that they print their envelopes and wrappers on white paper.

Business houses which have adopted one color and used it so long that it is a familiar trade mark dislike to make the change, but they recognize the justice of the request, in view of the fact that it will lighten the burden of the clerks and assist in the rapid and correct delivery of mail.

APPREHENSION.

A Story That Is Now Going the Rounds in Army and Navy Circles in Manila.

A veteran of the Mindanao campaign, says the Manila Volcano, was telling the other evening at the Army and Navy club to a lieutenant recently from the states, young in years and young in commission, of the curious animal that island.

"One of the strangest creatures I saw there," said he, "was what we called the 'red devil.' It was the identical part of the red devil pictured on a well-known brand of deviled ham, only it had no fork to its tail. It was in color a brilliant red. It had hands, feet and horns and stood erect, walking with a military bearing, which, if possessed by an officer on regimental parade, would attract great attention. We caught one, but it couldn't stand captivity and died."

"What was the matter?" asked the young lieutenant, solicitously, after a painful pause.

"Apprehension," laconically answered the veteran in 'sorrowing voice.

"Apprehension! Pray, for what?" "Apprehension that it might receive civil promotion." And the veteran fished for the slice of orange in the bottom of his glass.

Japanese Auctions.

At a Japanese auction the public do not call out their bids, but write their names, together with the amount they are willing to pay, on a slip of paper, and put it in a box. These are looked through and the articles awarded to the person who has made the biggest offer.

Industrial School for Negroes.

An industrial and agricultural school for colored youths of Maryland was opened last month near Laurel, in that state.

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